

HONORING THE WHITTINGTON CENTER

HON. BILL RICHARDSON

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 10, 1995

Mr. RICHARDSON. Mr. Speaker, this country's premier shooting and hunting center is located in northern New Mexico in my congressional district. As the proud Representative of the Whittington Center, I was honored to have had a tour of this outstanding facility during the August congressional recess.

As my colleagues debate and consider gun control measures, I would strongly suggest they too visit the Whittington Center and see first hand how responsible gun owners are training, shooting, and exercising their second amendment right.

Founded by the National Rifle Association in 1973, the Whittington Center is located in Raton, a wonderful community which has long been proud of its NRA neighbor. Whittington Center executive director Mike Ballew guided me through the Whittington complex. This facility, located on 52 square miles, is visited by some 70,000 people each year. It offers not just world class ranges for a variety of shooting, but hunting opportunities, training and camping sites. This is a first class center that all law-abiding shooters can be proud of.

While the Whittington Center is well known among the shooting public and hosts many competitive local, State, regional, and national matches, it does not receive much publicity. I agree with a recent commentary offered by Raton city commissioner Chip Ciammaichella that this center and the shooting sport deserves greater coverage so that more of our citizens have a better understanding of the NRA, the Whittington Center, and those who visit it.

I urge my colleagues to read Commissioner Ciammaichella's comments which follow as well as review literature I received from the Whittington Center during my August visit.

[From the Raton Range, Sept. 12, 1995]

SHOOTING SPORTS DESERVE MORE COVERAGE
(By Chips Ciammaichella)

Hearty congratulations to my good friend Ed Hager. He recently competed in the National Rifle Matches at Camp Perry, Ohio, and did very well. The "National Matches," as shooters have called them for years, is the Super Bowl of competitive high-powered rifle target shooting, drawing thousands of America's best civilian and military marksmen.

Ed competed in the "President's" match, as well as the National Trophy Match. Both matches had more than 1,400 top-notch participants, yet Ed was able to win the bronze medal in the Trophy Match, with only a mental lapse denying him first place. In the President's Match, Ed placed in the "President's 100" for the second straight year. Well done, buddy.

It's shame that Ed's achievements in such national competitions receive little or no local news' coverage. I realize that much of our local news comes from wire services and press releases, and today's high-tech communications make a wealth of information available from these sources. With so much information available at a news organizations' fingertips, much less time is spent "digging" for news. Since many people don't wish to "toot their own horn" with a press release, their achievements go un-noticed by the media. I guess, there's no substitute for good, old-fashioned legwork.

I realize that the shooting sports aren't football, but in Raton, I think that they should receive more coverage than at present. After all, we're the home of the NRA Whittington Center, easily the finest outdoor shooting facility in the world. Thousands of people shoot here every year, many of them in competition.

Whittington Center hosts many local, state, regional and national matches, and the number of large regional and national matches held here is increasing every year. With the future of Camp Perry always under attack, chances are good that the National Matches themselves will be held in Raton sometime in the not-too-distant future.

Raton benefits from the success of Whittington Center and the people who use the facility help our local economy. They stay in our motels, eat at our restaurants, fill-up at our gas stations and buy goods and services from our local merchants. Some even decide to move here. A little more news coverage of their exploits at Whittington would make them feel more at home and enhance their perception of Raton.

The combination of Whittington Center here in Raton, the respected Trinidad State Junior College gunsmithing school over the hill, New Mexico's reasonable gun laws and the natural beauty of our area make Raton an attractive prospective home to industry related to the shooting sports and firearms. It's a natural fit and a few firearms-related companies are already seriously eyeing Raton. I'm confident that more will follow, creating jobs for local people and helping to strengthen our local economy.

To succeed in drawing these companies to Raton, we need to have a better coordinated effort. While the Raton Chamber and Economic Development Council, Inc. has already targeted firearms-related industry, both government and the media can help out. Local government can best help by working to provide the infrastructure and quality of life that will make our community even more attractive to prospective businesses and individuals. The media can help out by paying more attention to the shooting sports and the people who compete in them.

I don't want to say that our local media has ignored shooting. Jim Roper and KRTN did quite a bit to make Whittington Center a reality, and Curtis Williams of The Range has just discovered the joys of practical pistol shooting. I'd just like to see a little more coverage of the matches held at Whittington and the people who compete in them. I'd also like to see coverage of some of our local shooters who compete at the state, regional or national levels.

NRA Whittington Center and the Raton Practical Shooting Club (Rat-Pack), will be hosting the USPSA/IPSC Area II practical shooting championships next spring. As a member of the Rat-Pack, albeit not one of the better shooters, I would like to compete. Between now and then I'm going to practice my little heart out, hoping to have a respectable showing in the match. Everyone, including Bill Richardson, knows that I crave attention. If I screw up and actually win the match (not blood likely), I'd sure like to hear my name on the radio and see my picture in the newspaper.

Better yet, maybe I'll just brag that I'm gonna win the thing, hands down, kind of like Cassius Clay used to do. Then, when I lose badly, The Range will definitely run the story.

NRA WHITTINGTON CENTER

"THE FUTURE OF SHOOTING"

Founded by NRA members . . . for NRA members

Founded in 1973, the NRA Whittington Center is the largest and most complete shoot-

ing and hunting complex in the world. Located on 52 beautiful square miles of New Mexico countryside, the NRA Whittington Center is truly your Whittington Center, with more than 70,000 visitors each year.

Created for the use of all NRA members and their families, the NRA Whittington Center offers an impressive range of fully-equipped shooting range facilities, camping and recreational areas, and some of the best hunting anywhere.

The NRA Whittington Center is owned, operated and funded by thousands of NRA members who want to preserve our hunting and shooting heritage of firearms ownership, hunting, and the shooting sports.

SHOOTING

"World-class ranges"

To play host for many of the top competitions in the world requires the best facilities . . . and that's exactly what you'll find at the NRA Whittington Center. An incredible variety of ranges are available—including high power, metallic silhouette, skeet, pistol, black powder, hunter sight-in, smallbore, trap and sporting clays.

All range facilities are designed to create the ideal shooting environment with safety as a priority.

HUNTING

"Trophy class"

The game rich NRA Whittington Center offers hunting opportunities for deer, elk, turkey, black bear, and more. Through effective wildlife management, consistently high success rates are achieved for all species at the Center . . . the finest hunting country in the Rockies. Everything you need to create the hunting and recreation adventure of a lifetime is available.

TRAINING

"Safety as a priority"

Firearms training makes up an important part of the activities at the NRA Whittington Center. Nationally-known instructors regularly conduct training in all shooting disciplines. Marksmanship and competition are strongly promoted, with the guiding principle of the safe handling of firearms.

NRA Whittington Center needs you!

You know what the best thing about the NRA Whittington Center is? It truly is Your NRA Whittington Center. The Center relies solely on the tax-deductible contributions of thousands of NRA members. Whether you plan to use this world-class facility or not, why not join with thousands of proud NRA members and support Your NRA Whittington Center today!

NRA Whittington Center, P.O. Box .30-06, Raton, NM 87740.

DR. JOSEPH A. MARASCO, JR., RECEIVES RADIOLOGY'S HIGHEST AWARD

HON. BUD SHUSTER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 10, 1995

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, on September 12, 1995, Dr. Joseph A. Marasco, Jr., received the American College of Radiology's highest award, their gold medal for his contributions to the field of radiology.

In his moving acceptance speech he said:

On a Spring day in 1910, an apprehensive but excited nine year old immigrant from southern Italy stepped onto Ellis Island with his parents who were seeking the promise of